

# MARG POND NATURAL AREA



## MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST ELEVEN POINT RANGER DISTRICT

### WHAT IS A NATURAL AREA?

Much of Missouri's original landscape no longer exists, but thanks to the Missouri Natural Areas System, some examples of it are being preserved and protected. Natural areas are important benchmarks to evaluate environmental change and serve as reservoirs of the state biological diversity. Additionally, natural areas provide opportunities for scientific study as well as educational, cultural, and recreational uses. Through protection from development and by managing to preserve the natural characteristics of the areas, the best examples of natural communities are preserved. Natural areas often provide essential habitat for rare and endangered plants and animals.



The Missouri Natural Areas Committee is an interagency committee, consisting of representatives of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy and the USDA Forest Service, who coordinate the classification, inventory, designation, and stewardship of natural areas in Missouri. Natural areas are owned by a variety of public agencies as well as private concerns.

The Mark Twain National Forest has a wide selection of natural areas, consisting of fens, sinkhole ponds, glades, forests, and aquatic communities.

## **MARG POND NATURAL AREA**

In certain parts of Missouri, karst topography exists. This land surface is created as rainwater filters down through limestone or dolomite to form large caverns and caves. When too much rock dissolves, the cave's ceiling collapses and a sinkhole appears. The sinkhole sometimes will clog up with surface materials and fill with water, creating a pond. Marg Pond is an upland sinkhole pond located near the center of a broad, flat ridge where it provides essential habitat for some rare and endangered species. Manna grass and two species of sedges continue to survive in this designated natural area. Upland sinkhole ponds are often threatened by grazing or fill with silt. Fortunately, Marg Pond has become protected due to the many pond species, the large size of the pond depression, and its overall natural quality. It is an outstanding example of a pond marsh.

## **POND MARSH**

This natural community is distinguished from the pond shrub swamp community by the dominance of herbaceous vegetation. The pond marsh community at Marg Pond has a large area of dense flora in the center, hosting aquatic plants like mermaid weed, sedges, and grasses. The shallower margins contain skullcap and sedges, along with the rose mallow and buttonbrush. The pond is encircled by a ring of red maple trees and dense mats of sphagnum moss.

## **WILDLIFE AT MARG POND**

Many animals find essential food and cover at Marg Pond. To amphibians, such as the marbled salamander and bullfrog, the pond marsh habitat is an important breeding site. Between April and mid-July, listen for the sound of marbles striking against each other rapidly. This is the Blanchard's cricket frog calling for a mate from the center of the marsh. Muskrats find abundant vegetation for constructing their houses and feeding huts.

Upland sinkhole ponds occur on dry ridges and therefore are important oases for wildlife. Around sunrise or sunset, you may see deer coming to drink. Watch and listen for wild turkey, visiting wood ducks, and an occasional little blue heron.

Be sure to use the **WHAT TO LOOK FOR AT MARG POND** check list when visiting this natural area.



## **OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Owned and managed by USDA Forest Service, Mark Twain National Forest – Eleven Point Ranger District.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS**

Hunting, trapping, fishing, camping, collection of plants and animals, and vehicular traffic are prohibited. Enjoy all other activities normally allowed on the National Forest.

## ADDITIONAL NATURAL AREAS

You may wish to visit nearby natural areas on the same day. Listed below are Mark Twain National Forest, National Park Service, and Missouri Department of Conservation natural areas. For more information on a particular site, check ownership and contact the Forest Service Ranger District office, National Park Service – Ozark National Scenic Riverways, or the Department of Conservation Wildlife District Supervisor in the town listed.

Mill Mountain	NPS	Van Buren, MO
Big Spring	NPS	Van Buren, MO
Overcup Oak Sink	USFS	Winona, MO
Cupola Pond	USFS	Winona, MO
Haney Pond	USFS	Doniphan, MO
Cowards Hollow	USFS	Doniphan, MO
Big Barren Creek	USFS	Doniphan, MO
Wells Branch Fen	USFS	Doniphan, MO
Grassy Pond	MDC	West Plains, MO

## SIZE, LOCATION, AND ACCESS

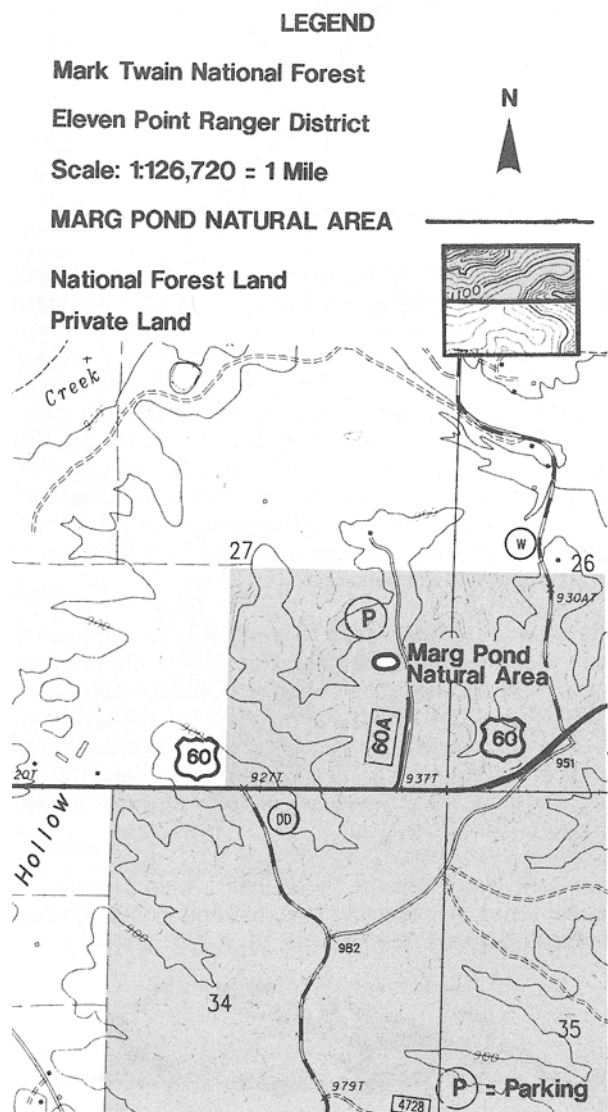
Forty-two acres (pond plus buffer zone) in Shannon County. Located in a portion of section 27, T27N, R3W of the Low Wassie 7.5 topographical quadrangle.

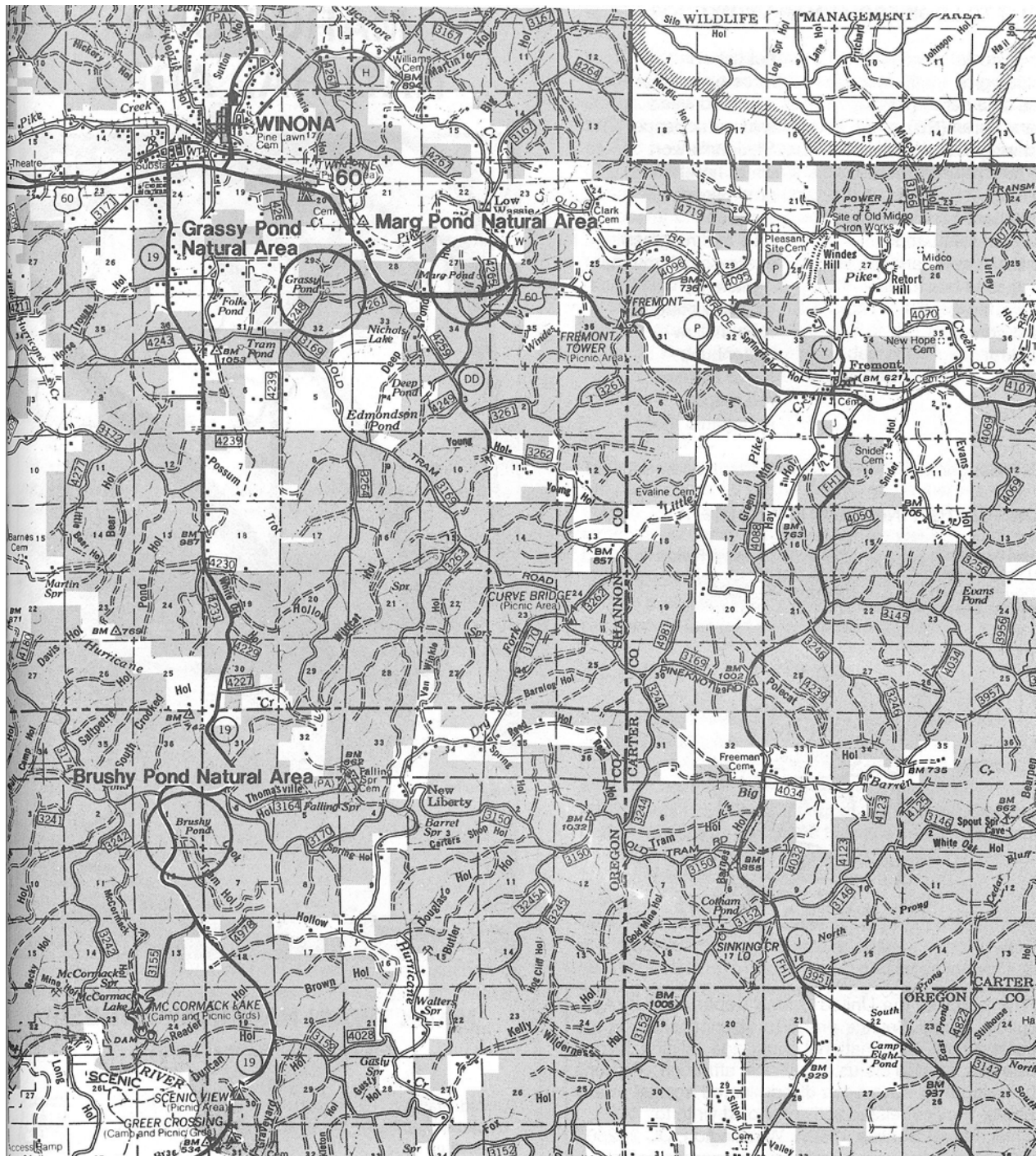
From Winona: Take U.S. highway 60 east approximately 4 miles to Shannon County road 60-A. Turn left (north) and travel 0.5 miles. Marg Pond can be seen from the road. Watch for Natural Area boundary signs.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR AT MARG POND

wood duck	bulrush
cattle egret	three-way sedge
little blue heron (R)	mermaid weed
marsh wren (SU)	wild water pepper
red-winged blackbird	St. John's-wort
northern spring peeper	water horehound
bullfrog	smartweed
Blanchard's cricket frog	skullcap
marbled salamander	pale manna grass
northern water snake	sharp-scaled manna grass (R)
three-toed box turtle	meadow beauty
cotton mouse (R)	rose mallow
least shrew	buttonbush
muskrat	sugar maple
mink	red maple
	sprhagnum moss

E = endangered      R = rare      SU = status  
undetermined





## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Forest Supervisor  
401 Fairgrounds Road  
Rolla, MO 65401  
(573) 364-4621

Eleven Point Ranger District  
#4 Confederate Ridge Road  
Doniphan, MO 63935  
(573) 996-2153